

Early Vancouver

Volume Seven

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Narrative of Pioneers of Vancouver, BC Collected between 1931-1956.

About the 2011 Edition

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August Jack Khahtsahlano, 1946.

Son of Khaytulk, or "Supple Jack," of Chaythoos, and grandson of Chief Khahtsahlanoogh (no European name) in whose honor the suburb of Kitsilano, Vancouver, is named. On 12th February 1879 he was baptised by Rev. Father N. Gregoire, as "Auguste, fils de Shinaokset, s. de Menaklot, Squamish, baptise l'age d'environ 16 mois le 12 fevrier, 1879". August stated, 16th July 1946: "Auguste!! That's me. When I little boy they call me "Menaklot", (pronounced tien-at-el-oh). But priest make mistake. My father Khay-tulk, he die day I was born. Qwy-what, my mother, marry Shinaokset (usually spelled Chimalset, i.e., "Téricho, Charlie, a very good man, whose first wife was Menaklot". The original baptismal certificate is in City Archives, deposited by August. August was born at the vanished Indian village of Skaug (False Creek Indian Reserve) in a lodge directly below the present Burrard Bridge. At this Squamish village, in the big long lodge of Tse-who-quam-kee and by Squamish rite, in the presence of a large assemblage of his tribe and visiting Indians from Inusquean, Nanaimo, Sechelt, and Ustlawm (North Vancouver) the patronymic of his grandfather, Khaht-sahlanoogh was conferred upon him with ceremony by a Squamish patriarch, and that of Khaytulk, their father, upon his brother Willie. They were both young men, and August, having acquired wealth by working in a nearby sawmill, returned the compliment by giving a potlatch at which he distributed to the assembled guests, men, women and children, over one hundred blankets, and other valuables, and also provided a feast. It took place before about 1900. See "Early Vancouver," Vol. four, page 19, in *Althaus*. On 26 Aug. 1938, by deed poll, deposited at Division of Vital Statistics, Victoria, and also City Archives, Vancouver, Mr. Khahtsahlano renounced the surname of Jack, by which he has been known, and assumed the name of August Jack Khahtsahlano. North American Productions 1st photo. Presented Dec. 1947, by Mrs. Thasie Arnytage-Moore, Vancouver. It appeared as a full front page illustration in the Indian monthly newspaper, "Native Voice", Vol. 1, No. 3, April 1947. August is a wise man, a courteous gentleman, and a natural historian. City Archives, 4 S.M.

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commons and slaves; even as we have an abundance of serfs to this day—only we don't call them that. So that as Khahtsah means "Lake," and Lanough means "man," what we get, actually, is "Man of the Lake," just as we say Prince of Wales, or Duke of Devonshire. Khahtsahlanough was the principal man of the lake district. Of course that is stretching it a bit, but, you will gather the "general idea."

Now, about pronunciations of Indian words, etc.: August said to me:

"Indians just as anxious he's boy have good education as whitemans he's boy go to university, but he's got no pencil," etc. etc.

Consequently, as old Mr. (Rev.) Tate told me, cases have arisen when a grandfather could not quite understand the words used by the grandson. Again, there are 200 Indian place names in and about Vancouver Harbour, but when I asked the Squamish Indian Council to confirm my spelling, and they did so, they said it was so done because, as they could not agree among themselves as to some of the pronunciations, and, as in other cases, it was impossible to convert Indian into English, my spelling was the best makeshift.

I regret having been so long, but plead that I have not covered a quarter of it.

With best wishes and my deep respects,

Most sincerely,

J.S. Matthews
CITY ARCHIVIST

Mrs. Walter Byron Kay,
Saturna P.O.
Saturna Island, B.C.

Note: for Squamish Indian Life and Names, see *Conversations with Khahtsahlano*, Matthews, 1955.

CONVERSATIONS WITH KHAHTSAHLANO, PAGE 22.

Conversation with August Jack Khahtsahlano, *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 3, 31 May 1934.

SAASMAT.

Major Matthews: What does Saasmat mean? The Spaniards who were here before Captain Vancouver say that the Indians called the place "Saasmat."

August Jack: "That must be down towards Indian River. Don't know what it means; don't think it has anything to do with Tsa-atalum, that's out Point Grey, means" (shrugging shoulders) "chill place. Tsa-tsa-slum out Point Grey, not Squamish language; don't know what Saasmat means, not same language. We never finished the place names up the Inlet. I give you some more now, all I can think of just now."

Chul-wah-ulch: Bidwell Bay, same name as Coal Harbour.

Taa-tum-sun: Don't know exactly where, but up by Port Moody, east of Barnet. Don't know meaning.

Tum-tay-mayh-tun: Belcarra, means land.

Spuc-ka-nash: Little White Rock on the point just where you pass mill (Dollarton). Means "White Rock," same as whitemans call it. (White Rock Island in middle of channel.)

Thluk-thluk-way-tun: Barnet Mill. Means "where the bark gets peeled" in spring.

Slail-wit-tuth: Indian River.

CONVERSATIONS WITH KHAHTSAHLANO, PAGE 193.

Conversation with Quitchetahl (Andrew Paul), North Vancouver, *Early Vancouver*, Vol. 3, 12 February 1934.

ANDREW PAUL, QOITCHETAHL. SASAAMAT.

Major Matthews: Can you tell me what Sasaamat means? I understand Galiano and Valdes say that they called Burrard Inlet Floridablanca, and that the natives called it Sasaamat—at least that portion up about Indian River.

Andrew Paul: “I never heard it called ‘Sasaamat,’ but I’ll find out from Haxten. It sounds to me like Tsaa-tsmat. You know Tsa-atlum, the cool place out at Point Grey; well, both names are from the same derivation, and I presume that the North Arm of the Burrard Inlet might be considered a ‘cool place,’ especially around Indian River.”

INDIANS. ARRIVAL OF FIRST C.P.R. TRAIN.

“You know the story of the Quitchetahl” (Serpent.) “Well, I have always been told that when the train first came down from Port Moody to Vancouver, the Indians along the south shore of the Inlet took fright and ran. A great long black snake of a thing with a big black head came twirling along the curves, blowing long blasts, Hoooooo, Hoooooo, Hoooooo, and the Indians thought it was a Quitchetahl coming back.”

CONVERSATIONS WITH KHAHTSAHLANO, PAGE 146.

THE NAME “KITSILANO” AND “KHAHT-SAH-LAH-NO.”

I have always claimed that the true meaning is “Man of the Lake,” i.e., as we use titles Prince of Wales, Duke of Connaught, Earl of Derby, etc., etc. The following more or less confirms it.

From *Travel and Adventure in Alaska*, 1868, by Whympier. Copy in City Archives, blue binding, gold letters, page 47. “The Indian name for Cowichan Lake is ‘Kaatz’a.”

The Cowichan Indians and the Indians at the mouth of the Fraser River were closely allied. If then “lanough” or “lano” means “man,” then Kaatzalanough, and Khahtsahlahnough are so similar as to be indistinguishable when converted into letters of the English language alphabet. Besides, no two Indians pronounce their own words exactly alike.

THE WORD “SIWASH.”

From *Among the An-ko-me-nums* by the Rev. Thomas Crosby, 1907. Copy in City Archives. Page 10:

The Coast Indians are spoken of, generally, as Siwashes, a term which the more intelligent resent, and which is taken from the word “Indian” in the Chinook or trade jargon.

There is some doubt, however, as to the origin of the word “Siwash.” By some it is thought to be a corruption of the French word “Sauvage” (barbarian) as applied to the Indians by the Northwesters generally. But, in all probability, it is a corruption of the generic term “Salish,” which is given by ethnologists to the whole family.

(With which reasoning I am in entire disagreement. It’s just “savage” changed to suit. J.S. Matthews.)

CONVERSATIONS WITH KHAHTSAHLANO, PAGE 279.

INDIAN VILLAGES AND LANDMARKS, BURRARD INLET AND HOWE SOUND.

It has been asked—merely that the point be not overlooked—“Is it possible that the Indians could have moved their villages after 1791?”

The answer is, “No, never.” As is also the case with their white brethren, Indians went camping in summer, and sheltered themselves much as Europeans do, in light, frail coverings. Europeans use tents; the Indians used woven mats suspended from poles. When winter came they retired to their warm, enduring lodges of cedar slabs, where they were cosy and comfortable; had dances and told tales. To us

such an existence would seem intolerable, but they had never known anything else, and did not miss anything they knew nothing about—such as tea and sugar.

The known Indian villages in the vicinity of Vancouver have stood in the identical location for centuries upon centuries.

CONVERSATIONS WITH KHAHTSAHLANO, PAGE 154.

CHEAKAMUS. (STATION, LAKE, RIVER, MOUNTAIN, GLACIER.)

Conversation with August Jack Khahtsahlano, Capilano Indian Reserve, at reception to Superintendent Larsen, R.C.M.P. at H.M.C.S. *Discovery*, Wednesday, 13 October 1954.

Major Matthews: August! What does Cheakamus mean?

August: “Basket; basket catch fish. Put basket in ripple in river; fish go inside; cannot get out.”

Major Matthews: How long? Long as this motor car?

August: “Oh no, not that long. About ten feet.”

Major Matthews: How wide?

August: “‘Bout so high” (holding hand level with middle of thigh.) “‘Bout three feet.”

Major Matthews: Draw me sketch.

August: “All right. I draw it.”

Major Matthews: It could be called “Fish Trap River”?

August: “Why call it that when Cheakamus is better name. It’s ‘Cheakamus,’ that’s ‘basket catch fish.’”

CONVERSATIONS WITH KHAHTSAHLANO, PAGE 280.

INDIANS DIGGING FOR CLAMS, FIRST NARROWS.

On December ninth, tenth, eleventh, 1946, and again on June twentieth and twenty-first, 1947, unusually low tides occurred in the First Narrows and remind me of tales I have been told, I think perhaps by some whiteman but possibly by Khahtsahlano.

FIRST NARROWS. WHOI-WHOI. CHAYTHOOS. PROSPECT POINT. BROCKTON POINT. CLAMS. TORCHES. PITCH STICKS.

Indians lived in large numbers at Whoi-Whoi (Lumberman’s Arch); fewer at Chaythoos (Pipe Line Road). They dug clams, caught fish, for instance, octopi, under rocks, especially the huge boulder now gone. Coming at night, through the First Narrows at extreme low tide, just as it turned from ebb to flow, the pleasing spectacle presented itself in the darkness, of hundreds of tiny lights, stretching in an uncertain line into the distance, glowing in the inky dark shadow of the trees lining the shore of Stanley Park from Prospect Point to Brockton Point; not, perhaps, solidly all the way, but more or less continuous in large or small numbers. The Indians were harvesting clams from the narrow belt of beach exposed to their spades by the extreme low tide. Indians made torches of slivers and fir gum adhering; pitch sticks they called them, and they did a lot of night illumination, such [as], for instance, the little fires on boards across their canoes covered with mud to prevent the boards from catching fire, which noiseless little fires attracted the curiosity of wild fowl, and so brought them close enough to be speared or their necks twisted with a forked stick.

The tide mentioned above was minus 1.3 feet about midnight on above nights—very, very low, and exposed clam beds which may not have been exposed to digging for more than two years.

CONVERSATIONS WITH KHAHTSAHLANO, PAGE 140.

Conversation with August Jack Khahtsahlano, my old friend of years, who lives still at the Capilano Indian Reserve, his home almost directly under the First Narrows Bridge—to the east of it, where he lives with his demure little lady and wife, Mary Ann, or Swanamia. The longer I know August the more respect and admiration I have for him. He will be 72 next November (1949) and is as kindly a gentleman—and a wise one, too—as ever I knew. He came strolling in this morning to see me, nothing especial on his mind, 16 May 1949.

AUGUST JACK KHAHTSAHLANO. MANATIA. MENATALOT.

Major Matthews: What does this mean? It says here on this baptismal certificate of yours signed by Father Fregonne in 1879, that you are the son of Shinoatset (Chinalset) and Menatalot. When you were a small boy didn't they call you Menatalot, because you were a baby, and had not been named yet?

Khahtsahlano: "I don't know positively who Menatalot was. She must have been my godmother. If so, she must have been a Sechelt woman. When I was a very little boy I was called Manatia, Man-at-ia. Menatalot might have been a half-sister."

Major Matthews: Pretty name.

Khahtsahlano: "Then, when I was about twelve, they called my Stay-maulk, Stay-maugh, Staymaughlk."

Major Matthews: (impetuously) Oh, I give up. (He had been trying to repeat August's pronunciation.)

Khahtsahlano: "You'll have to get your tongue set right; so that it will click like mine." (Finally, the best Major Matthews can do is "Stay-maulk." "So, after a time, they say, 'You getting tired of that name, tired of Stay-maulk! We'll give you another name.' So they had a potlatch at Snauq" (Kitsilano Indian Reserve) "and called me 'Khahtsahlano.'")

CONVERSATIONS WITH KHAHTSAHLANO, PAGE 141.

Conversation with Mr. August Jack Khahtsahlano, of Capilano Indian Reserve, where he lives with his wife, Mary Ann, or Swanamia (her Squamish name) who very kindly called at my home, 1158 Arbutus Street, Kitsilano, this afternoon, 21 May 1949, for a chat. We took easy chairs and sat out on the lawn under the trees. Mr. Khahtsahlano, grandson of Old Chief Khahtsahlanogh, in whose honour "Kitsilano," Vancouver, is named, will be 72 next November (1949). He was born on the False Creek Indian Reserve, son of Khay-tulk, or "Supplejack," and his wife Qwhy-wat. He is six feet tall. His hair has been jet black. Although he does not read nor write, he is the best informed Indian I know of, and his remarks on Indian life, customs and lore are very reliable. J.S.M.

AUGUST JACK KHAHTSAHLANO.

Major Matthews: (fingering August's hair as he sat) What's this, Khahtsahlano? White hairs? (Just a few.)

August: (smiling) "I must be getting old."

Major Matthews: Good gracious! What's happened to your hands? They're whiter than mine. What have you been doing to them?

(Mr. Khahtsahlano's hands were formerly as brown as any Indian's hands, but are now as white as any European's.)

August: "Been using too much whiteman's soap, I guess, and washed all the colour out" (of his skin.)

BIRTH OF INDIAN BABIES.

Major Matthews: August, you told me once that from three to five thousand Indians lived in and about Burrard Inlet and Howe Sound before the whitemans came. How many Indian babies do you suppose would be born in twelve months—one year? Do you think one hundred babies would be born?

August: "One hundred! More than that; more than one hundred. Healthy babies, too."

Major Matthews: They had no hospitals, no doctors, no nurse. What did they do when a baby came? Whitemans got hospitals, doctors, nurses; big fuss when baby come. Nurses got white clothes, tie something over their mouth so's baby no breathe nurse's breath; got to look at baby through glass window up at Grace Hospital. What do you think about that?

August: "Indian womans not have baby in house. When Indian womans going to have baby she go out. Too much noise in house. Go somewhere where it is quiet; in house too much noise. No doctor, no nurse, but lots friends. Another woman's help."

Major Matthews: Well, where did she go? Go out in the cold; go out in the rain?

August: "Klis-kwis. Make klis-kwis. In some quiet place. Maybe, if Indian woman what's going to have baby is strong, she make klis-kwis herself. Have baby in klis-kwis. Quiet."

(A klis-kwis is a sort of tent, made of poles covered with closely woven mats of cedar bark, etc., commonly used when Indians travel, especially in summer.)

Major Matthews: You think many baby die?

August: "Nooooooo. Baby healthy. Now babies got T.B. But those babies healthy. No T.B. Not feed baby out of bottle; no bottle. Not get milk out of can. They's got no canned milk. They's give mother stuff to drink; make it from herbs. They put hot water on her breasts. Make it" (poultice) "with cedar bark; that's to make milk come. No bottle for Indian baby; they's healthy. Now all the time T.B."

WILD PIGEONS.

Major Matthews: August, I've been reading a book written long time ago—1862—nearly hundred years ago. (*Travels in British Columbia*, 1862, by Capt. C.E. Barrett-Lennard. Page 160: "Vast flocks of wild pigeons are occasionally seen.") And it says that there used to be lots of wild pigeons. You remember telling me, long time ago, about wild pigeons? How big were those pigeons?

August: "About as big as a tame pigeon. One time lots of pigeons. They not stay; they just feed and go on to next place. Where there be lots of berries they come; lots of pigeons. Then, after they eat berries, they go. They go some other place where there are more berries. Pigeons not stop in same place all the time."

CONVERSATIONS WITH KHAHTSAHLANO, PAGE 279.

INDIAN SPEAR POINT AND TOOL SHARPENING STONE FROM TSAWWASSEN BEACH.

Conversation with Andrew Herbert Mitchell, 1215 West 7th Avenue, brother [of] the late Alex Mitchell, Secretary, Vancouver Pioneers Association, who, very kindly, came carrying a small parcel in his hand, which he opened, 16 September 1949.

INDIAN RELICS FROM TSAWWASSEN BEACH.

Mr. Mitchell: "I dug this flint spear point" (six inches long) "and this broken piece of reddish whetstone" (shale) "out of my garden—two lots, right on the top of the hill, English Bluff Road, east side, I think the number of one of my lots is 24, down at Tsawwassen Beach near Point Roberts. That was about 1946.

"I was planting potatoes. How deep they were originally I don't know because I had had a bulldozer clearing the ground of roots and stumps, but when I got them they were down about twelve inches. So I give them to your City Archives."

Note: the two relics have been marked, as to what they are, in India ink. J.S.M.